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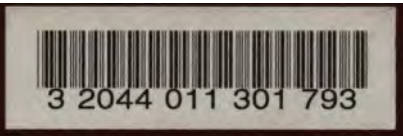

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NARRATIVE

OF

HENRY WATSON,

A FUGITIVE SLAVE.

The Author attending at the Dinner-Table.

Third Edition.

BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY BELA MARSH, 25 CORNHILL.
1850.

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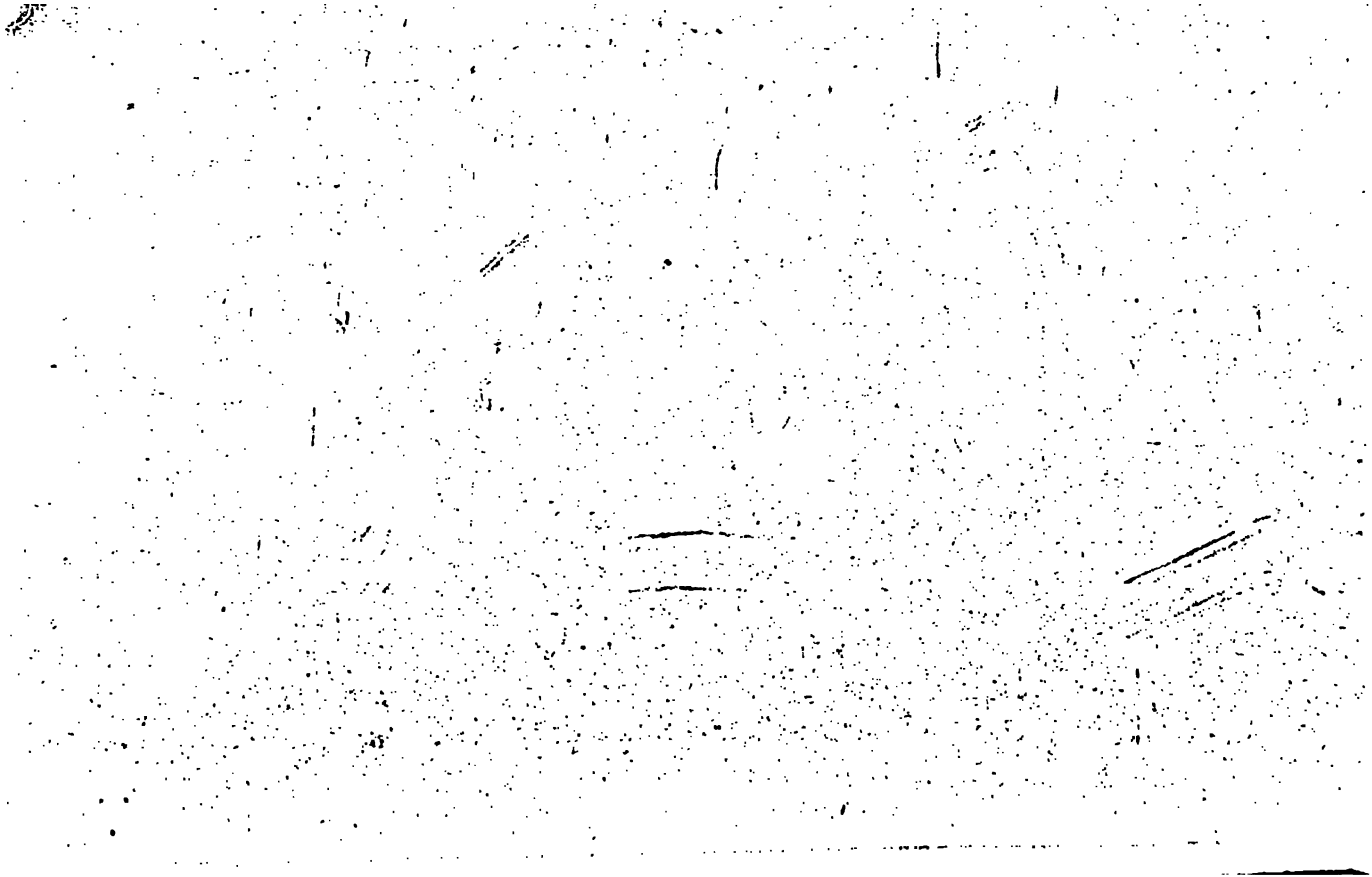

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Life of the Prince

DEDICATION.

MR. HENRY HOLT:

DEAR SIR,—

WILL you allow me, from feelings of sincere gratitude, to dedicate to you my little Narrative, which, had it not been for you, I never should have been able to have published? and let me assure you that I shall ever entertain the most devoted feelings of gratitude, for your kind and humane interference in my behalf, when I was a hopeless slave.

I remain yours, most gratefully,

H. WATSON.

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PREFACE.

It is not to be expected that one who has passed through slavery's fiery ordeal as I have done, can entertain the reader with as exquisite touches of sensibility, in giving my experience, as the subject would warrant. A Hogarth's pen would scarcely suffice to correctly delineate all the terrific scenes of slavery. Mortal man never yet fully conceived of the whole of its horrors, and never will be able thoroughly to understand its enormities, until the arrival of that day, when the deeds of man shall be accurately portrayed by Him whose eye only penetrates the dark recesses of slavery's prison-house, and whose ear is the only hearer of all of the words of anguish which ascend from its gloomy caverns. I have not attempted in this narrative to embellish or to exaggerate. My aim has been simply to present a faithful record of a few only of the transactions I have been eye-witness of, hoping that a perusal of them might add something to the already abundant testimony of the horrors of the slave system.

Reader, I have been a slave; for twenty-six long years did the cruel iron of slavery enter my soul. I know no good in the execrable system. If you think there is any, my place is vacant, and you can go and fill it; but before you venture upon this step, let me tell you that the hundredth part of the cruelties of slavery are not specified here. Whatever may be said of its beauties, I am assured of this truth, that "Slavery, disguise thyself as thou wilt, still thou art a bitter cup."

NARRATIVE OF HENRY WATSON.

I WAS born in Virginia, about thirteen miles from Fredericksburg, as near as I can now recollect, in the year 1813. Mother was a slave, and belonged to a man by the name of Bibb, whose Christian name I cannot remember. My mother was called Letty. Slaves seldom have but one name; and I never heard her called by any other. I was at that time called Bill. I never had any brother or sister, that I know of. Like the most of my brothers in bondage, I have no correct account of my age. Slaves keep the birth of their children by the different seasons of the year. Children often ask their parents their age. The answer is, "this planting corn time, you are six, eight, or ten," just as it may happen to be; but even this knowledge was I deprived of by my master, who was one of those proud Virginians, whose principal business was to raise slaves for the market; though I was permitted to remain with my mother on his plantation until I was about eight years of age. My mother was the cook at what slaves call the great house. I was allowed to remain with her at the house. The last time I saw her, she placed me on the bed, which was in a room adjoining the kitchen, and bid me go to sleep, saying that she would be back again in a few

moments. I did so; and when I awoke in the morning I found myself in the great house, wrapped up in a blanket, before the fire. I could not account for this change that had been made with me through the night. I asked for my mother, but no one spoke. I went out into the kitchen, where she used to work. She was not there, and it was evident to me that she was gone; where, I knew not. I returned to the house, and implored my mistress, with tears in my eyes, to tell me where my mother had gone. She refused, though a mother herself, to give me any satisfaction whatever. Every exertion was made on my part to find her, or hear some tidings of her; but all my efforts were unsuccessful; and from that day I have never seen or heard from her. This cruel separation brought on a fit of sickness, from which they did not expect I would recover. The old slave-woman who took care of me during my sickness, by way of consolation, gave me as much information as she could about my mother's being taken away. She told me that a slave-dealer drove to the door in a buggy, and my mother was sent for to come into the house; when, getting inside, she was knocked down, tied, and thrown into the buggy, and carried away. As the old woman related these things to me, I felt as if all hope was gone; that I was forsaken and alone in this world. More forcibly did I then feel the galling chains of slavery, the cruelty and barbarism arising from it, than I ever have since. I resolved, however, to bear with all patiently, till I became large enough to run away, and search for my mother.

I had recovered from my sickness but a few months, when one day, looking up the road, I saw a man riding towards the house; I ran with the rest of the children to

hide ourselves until the man had gone. When I had remained concealed some time, I ventured out again, and found Mr. Bibb, my master, looking for me, who ordered me into the house; and when I got there, to my astonishment, I found the man whom we had hid ourselves from, sitting in the room. After he had inspected me to his satisfaction, I was ordered out of the room, and went to play, and had forgotten the whole affair, when my master called me again, and ordered me to hold the stranger's horse. I did so, and in a few minutes he came forth and ordered me to mount behind him. This, with his assistance, I did; but rode only a short distance, when I jumped from the horse and ran for the house as fast as I could. He succeeded, however, in overtaking me, and I was again put on the horse, this time in front of him; and in this way was I carried to Fredericksburg. I was then placed in the possession of Mr. Janer, better known as Parson Janer; the man that had bought me being the son of Mr. Janer, who was one of those jolly, good-natured clergymen, who, while he feasted his numerous guests in the parlor, starved his slaves in the kitchen. After remaining there awhile, it was determined to send me to Richmond. The same man that brought me, came for me and ordered me to take a seat on the stage-coach, and the next day I found myself in Richmond, and stopped at the Eagle Hotel, kept by Mr. Holman, where I remained two or three days, and then was carried to the auction room; entering which, I found several slaves, seated around the room waiting for the hour of sale. Some were in tears; others were apparently cheerful. This brought to my mind my mother, and caused me to shed many tears; but they fell unheeded.

The auctioneer was busy examining the slaves before the sale commenced. At last every thing was ready, and the

The Author upon the Auction Block.

traffic in human flesh began. I will attempt to give as accurate an account of the language and ceremony of a slave auction as I possibly can. "Gentlemen, here is a likely boy; how much? He is sold for no fault; the

owner wants money. His age is forty. Three hundred dollars is all that I am offered for him. Please to examine him; he is warranted sound. Boy, pull off your shirt—roll up your pants—for we want to see if you have been whipped." If they discover any scars, they will not buy; saying that the nigger is a bad one. The auctioneer seeing this, cries, "Three hundred dollars, gentlemen, three hundred dollars. Shall I sell him for three hundred dollars? I have just been informed by his master that he is an honest boy, and belongs to the same church that he does." This turns the tide frequently, and the bids go up fast; and he is knocked off for a good sum. After the men and women are sold, the children are put on the stand. I was the first put up. On my appearance, several voices cried, "How old is that little nigger?" On hearing this expression, I again burst into tears, and wept so that I have no distinct recollection of his answer. I was at length knocked down to a man whose name was Denton, a slave trader, then purchasing slaves for the Southern market. His first name I have forgotten. Each one of the traders has private jails, which are for the purpose of keeping slaves in, and they are generally kept by some confidential slave. Denton had one of these jails, to which I was conducted by his trusty slave; and on entering I found a great many slaves there, waiting to be sent off as soon as their numbers increased. These jails are enclosed by a wall about sixteen feet high, and the yard-room is for the slaves to exercise in; and consists of but one room, in which all sexes and ages are huddled together in a mass. I staid in this jail but two days, when the number was completed, and we were called out to form a

line. Horses and wagons were in readiness to carry our provisions and tents, so that we might camp out at night. Before we had proceeded far, Mr. Denton gave orders for us to stop, for the purpose of handcuffing some of the men, who, he said in a loud voice, "had the devil in them." The men belonging to this drove were all married men, and all leaving their wives and children behind; he, judging from their tears that they were unwilling to go, had them made secure. We started again on our journey, Mr. Denton taking the lead in his sulky, and the driver, Mr. Thornton, brought up the rear. I will not weary my readers with the particulars of our march to Tennessee, where we stopped several days for the purpose of arranging our clothes. While stopping, the men were hired out to pick cotton. While in Tennessee, we lost four of our number, who died from exposure on the road. After the lapse of three weeks, we started again on our journey, and in about four weeks arrived in Natchez, Miss., and went to our pen, which Mr. Denton had previously hired for us, and had our irons taken off and our clothes changed; for Mr. Denton was expecting visitors to examine the flock, as he would sometimes term us. There was a sign-board in front of the house, which informed traders that he had on hand, blacksmiths, carpenters, field-hands; also several sickly ones, whom he would sell very cheap. In a short time purchasers became plenty, and our number diminished. I was not sold for several weeks, though I wished to be the first, not wishing to witness his cruelty to his slaves any longer; for if they displeased him in the least, he would order them to be stripped, and tied hand and foot together. He would then have his paddle brought, which was a board

Whipping with the paddle, as witnessed by the Author.

about two feet in length and one inch in thickness, having fourteen holes bored through it, about an inch in circumference. This instrument of torture he would apply, until the slave was exhausted, on parts which the purchaser would not be likely to examine. This mode of punishment is considered one of the most cruel ever invented, as the flesh protrudes through these holes at every blow, and forms bunches and blisters the size of each hole, causing much lameness and soreness to the person receiving them. This punishment is generally inflicted in the morning, before visitors come to examine the slaves.

Just before the doors are opened, it is usual for the keeper to grease the mouths of the slaves, so as to make it appear that they are well and hearty, and have just done eating fat meat; though they seldom, if ever, while in the custody of the keeper, taste a morsel of meat of any kind.

At length, a man made his appearance; the very man of all others I had ever seen, from whom I should shrink and be afraid. He was dark-complexioned, had sharp, gray eyes, and peaked nose, and compressed lips; indeed, he was a very bad-looking man. I never wish to look upon his face again. His name was Alexander McNeill, a member of the firm of McNeill, Fiske & Co. He said he wanted a boy to bring up to suit himself. He took a great fancy to me, and after some discussion about the price, agreed at last to give five hundred dollars for me. I quitted my old quarters, and went with my new master to his store. He told me my duty for the future would be, to wait upon him,—"to jump when I was

spoken to, run when sent upon errands, and if I did not mind my P's and Q's, I should be flogged like h—l."

As I did not like my new master's appearance, I at once concluded to please him in all things. But it was all in vain; for the first morning I was severely flogged for not placing his clothes in the proper position on the chair. The second morning I received another severe flogging for not giving his boots as good a polish as he thought they had been accustomed to. Thus he went on in cruelty, and met every new effort of mine to please him with fresh blows from his cowhide, which he kept hung up in his room for that purpose. In a few days he made arrangements for a journey, on which I was to accompany him. The object of his journey was made known to me by some of his servants; and, as that journey turned out to be of great importance to me, I will give it to the world, as I got it from my author. My master was a married man, although I had never seen my mistress, as she was living with her mother, sixty miles from the city;—she having found out, while living with her husband in the city, that he had made a wife of one of his slaves, had left him, and had gone to her mother; and the object of his journey was to induce her to come back and live with him. I accompanied him on this journey; and, although he made every effort on his part to induce her to return, she refused to do so. He returned to Natchez, enraged at his ill success, and determined never to make another attempt at reconciliation. He concluded to leave the city, and he purchased a farm near Vicksburg, on the Mississippi River, upon which he settled. My master always was a cruel man; but ever

since his unsuccessful effort at reconciliation with his wife, he became a perfect tyrant, lashing his slaves without mercy. This shows one of the many ways in which the licentious slaveholder inflicts pain on poor slaves; robbing them, by force, of their virtue, then lacerating their backs for having allowed themselves thus to be forced. He had not been long on his farm before he took another of his slave-women to wife, by whom he had two children.—These children were not treated any better than any other slaves; the mother being out in the field all the day, and in his room at night. Upon this farm were one hundred field-hands, and two house servants, the cook and myself. For the accommodation of the field-hands there were twenty-seven cabins, one hospital, one jail, one gin-house; at which house, as in the jail, there are two pair of stocks, for the torture of slaves. As the stocks on farms are different in their construction from those commonly used in cities, I will give you a description of them. They consisted of two rough logs, generally about twelve feet in length, one of them laid upon the ground, with notches cut in it to fit the neck and arms; the other log, which was cut with corresponding notches, was placed upon the victim to keep him in his position. They were fastened at one end by a massive hinge; and when the sufferer was in them, the other end was secured by a large padlock. There were other modes of punishing; but these were used for extreme cases, such as running away, or stealing, &c. On the occasions of whipping by the stocks, it was my duty to be present; and at the end of each hundred, to apply salt to the bleeding back of the sufferer till the blood was staunched, when the whipping

was renewed, until the delinquent had received four or five hundred lashes. These cruelties were principally inflicted by the overseer, who was a drunken, quarrelsome person, whom it was impossible to please: and when he was in liquor he took very great delight in inflicting punishment on the slaves. Beside the overseer there was a driver, one of the slaves, named Harry. He had a wife and children, whom, in case of their being slightly in fault, he would have to lash with an unflinching hand; there being no sympathy allowed to be shown between even man and wife. I will relate a circumstance which made a very great impression on my mind at that time. There was a slave on the farm by the name of Jo. The overseer had threatened to put him in the stocks, for some trivial offence. Jo, dreading the severity of the punishment, ran away, which fact was soon brought to my master's knowledge, who ordered the overseer to shoot him the first time he saw him. The overseer being a bloodthirsty fiend, like my master, kept strict watch for Jo, and the second night, he saw him but a short distance from his cabin, where he was probably going for the purpose of seeing his wife and children, and getting something to eat; but he never saw those eyes light up with pleasure,—never heard the sweet music of their voices, or felt their warm embrace,—for the incarnate fiend's aim was too sure; he was stretched dead in an instant. Yes: this man was hurried into the presence of his Maker, without the power of speaking one word of prayer. On the master being informed that his brutal order had been obeyed, he gave orders that his body should not be removed from the spot where he fell, as he wished it to serve as an example to the

rest of us: and there it remained, the vultures rioting and feasting on the remains of a man, whose only fault was a black skin.

Never shall I forget the horrible sensation that passed through my veins as I gazed upon the mutilated body of this poor man; but alas! I could do nothing; I was myself a slave. My heart grew sad; I dropped a tear to his memory, and departed, cherishing a hope that at no distant day I would be free. Although these facts were known to the neighbors, yet no one asked even a question about it. He was a slave; no one cared for him. I say no one —I am wrong; where was the slave's wife? where were the slave's children?—had they no tears to shed? Ah! yes, many; not tears from physical pain, but tears, scalding tears, of pure grief. The husband and father shot like a dog before them; his bleeding form writhing in agony, and the sightless eyeballs glaring upon them; and they dare not approach to straighten his stiffening limbs, or close his sightless eyes! Ah! was there not grief? And even this would have been denied them, had they shown it before this savage monster.

I will not pain my readers with further details of my master's cruelty; but will give them a few of the monster's laws. They were as follows: In the morning, half an hour before daylight, the first horn was blown, at which the slaves arose and prepared themselves for work. At daylight another horn was blown, at which they all started in a run for the field, with the driver after them, carrying their provisions for the day in buckets. In a few moments the overseer would make his appearance, and give his orders to the driver, who gave them to the hands. They

then went to work, and worked until such time as the driver thought proper, when he would crack his whip two or three times, and they would eat their breakfasts, which consisted of strong, rancid pork, coarse corn bread, and water, which was brought them by small children, who were not able to handle the hoe. As soon as Harry, the driver, has finished his breakfast, they finish likewise, and hang up their buckets on the fence or trees, and to work they go, without one moment's intermission, until noon, when they take their dinner in the same manner as their breakfast; which done, they go again to work, continuing till dark. They then return to their cabins, and have a half hour to prepare their food for the next day, when the horn is again blown for bed. If any are found out of their cabins after this time, they are put in jail and kept till morning, when they generally receive twenty-five or thirty lashes for their misdemeanor. So it continues through the week until Sunday, when the women take their tubs and blankets, and start for the brooks, where they dismantle and robe themselves in their blanket, wash and dry their clothes, put them on again, and are ready to be at the house at four o'clock to receive their weekly allowance, which is weighed out to them by the overseer. The men give their shirts to the women to wash, and take their baskets or hoes and start for the field. They are generally paid for this extra work; if they do not work, they are set down as lazy persons, and are whipped because they will not work for themselves. Thus is the Sabbath passed. That day of rest and prayer is as other days to the poor slave. For six years whilst I was on this farm, there was

never such a thing as a slave going to meeting, or hearing the word of God in any form.

Much has been said about the marriage rites of slaves; but there exists no legal form,—every slaveholder having a form of his own. Permit me, then, to give to my readers the manner in which my master performed the ceremony. Whenever a vacancy occurred in any of the cabins of either sex, of marriageable age, it was immediately filled up by my master purchasing another slave, either man or woman, as the case might be, and presenting them to the remaining inmates of the cabin, with the following words: "Kitty, stand out in the floor; I have bought this boy to-day for your husband, and I shall expect you to take good care of him, by washing and mending his clothes. You know my orders to the overseer; if either of you go to the field on Monday morning without your clothes being washed, you are to be whipped. You will also take care of his provisions, which will be weighed out with yours. Have it cooked and ready in his bucket in time for him to go to the field every morning. You understand what I have said to you;" which the slave must answer with a low bow, and replying, "I do, sir." Then he will give the man the following charge: "Tom, you will take care of this girl for your wife, by bringing her wood, making her fire, bringing water. Should your wife or self want any thing, you can get it by working on Sunday, for which I will allow you fifty cents a day, out of the store." He would then ask them both if they understood his orders. They would answer as before, with a low bow and courtesy, replying that they did. He would then pronounce them man and

wife, and say to them, "If you fail to perform any of the duties I have mentioned, you will be flogged severely."

To give a sketch of all the cruelties that I witnessed on Mr. McNeill's place, would occupy more space in this little book than I desire. I will give a description of the manner in which the dead slaves are disposed of. On the death of a slave, I was sent by my master to the overseer, requesting him to send two boys to the house. On their arrival, he would order them to the hospital, or sick-house, as it is generally called, and they would take the body, fasten it in the blanket on which he died, put it on the hand-barrow, and carry it to its place of burial. This was generally done very hastily, on account of the climate. Thus are they bundled into the earth, without minister or coffin, or permitting the husband, or wife, or mother, to see the last disposal of that which has been dear to them on earth.

I was on this farm about six years, five of which I was employed as house servant; and it is probable that I should have remained in the house, had I not refused to give him some information respecting a pig, which two of the men had stolen. This disobedience caused me much suffering. In the first place, I was severely whipped with a cowskin, the scars of which punishment I have to this day, and then I was sent to the field to work,—the place I dreaded mostly. From morning till night could the whip be heard, accompained with the cries and groans of the sufferers, whilst I was employed at the house. I was not under the direction of the cruel overseer, and consequently escaped his cruelty. A day seldom passed without witnessing several hundred lashes inflicted upon the slaves; each indi-

vidual having a stated number of pounds of cotton to pick, the deficit of which was made up by as many lashes being applied to the poor slave's back as he was so unlucky as to fall short in the number of pounds of cotton which he was to have picked.

As I had not been accustomed to field-work, I found it impossible to keep up with the others. The overseer, seeing this, came up to me and asked me if I knew where I was; I said I did; he then replied, that I had been at the house so long that I had got the devil in me; and if I did not keep my row up with the rest, he would give me a hundred lashes, and that d——d quick. To this I did not reply, but toiled on to the best of my knowledge, hoping to escape punishment; but all in vain; frequently was I whipped without any just cause. I do now think that he made me his particular victim on account of my having been out of his power so long a time. I am incapable of describing the great difference between house and field labor. I have, since my settling in the North, heard many persons, in speaking of slavery as they have seen it in cities, towns, &c., where it exists in its mildest form, apologizing for it, holding it forth to the world as a great benefit to the black man. They say the slaves are nicely fed, clothed, and taken care of in a very comfortable manner. But step back in the interior of slave States, on the plantations, where you see one hundred slaves in charge of a drunken overseer, thinly clad, and scantily fed; driven forth to labor from daylight till dark; where a slave for the most trivial offence may be whipped to death, for in case of death arising from whipping, the overseer is indifferent,—he knows the master cannot use the word of his

slave against him,—he will not acknowledge it himself. Thus there is nothing to restrain him from using the most unnatural and inhuman cruelty to the poor slaves.

Towards the end of the year that I was in the field, my suffering increased to that degree that it caused me to lift my voice to Almighty God, and pray fervently for a termination of my sufferings in death; though, at that time, I was ignorant of the blessings of religion. I have thought that the God of the oppressed heard my prayer and came to my relief, by changing my situation, under the following circumstances. About that time, his younger brother, William, visited the farm, with his wife, and had been at the house some two or three weeks before I saw him. A few days before he left I was sent for to come to the house, by the servant whom my master had bought to take my place when I was put in the field. On my approaching the house, I observed my master, his brother, and wife, standing in the door looking at me. Mr. William McNeill spoke to me, and told me that he had bought me. He then ordered me into the kitchen to wash, and sent me out a pair of pantaloons and a shirt, in which I appeared much better than in the ragged covering which I had cast off. I was then sent to the house, and there he made me acquainted with my duties as a body servant, which, as they were similar to those of my former master, it would be useless to describe. As I was delighted with this change, and there was something so pleasing in the manner of my new master, so different from that of my old one, I entered into my duties with pleasure. In a few days I started with my master and mistress for Louisiana, to visit her father's plantation, who was a sugar planter, and a

more cruel one I do not think was to be found in that neighborhood. We remained a few weeks there, when my master made arrangements to visit Kentucky, leaving his wife behind. We went up the Mississippi as far as Memphis, there leaving the boat and taking the stage for Nashville, Tennessee, and from thence to Lexington, Kentucky. A few days after our arrival, my master made me acquainted with the object of his visit, which was to purchase slaves, intending to take them to Mississippi, where he was going to farming; and he instructed me to tell all slaves who should inquire of me if he was a good master, that he was, to which I readily assented; and, as he did not wish to purchase any that were not willing to go with him, he would frequently send them to me, and I gave them satisfactory proofs of his kindness. He soon got a sufficient number, and started for the Mississippi by land. They all started willingly on their journey, and arrived at its end without any difficulty. This is to be wondered at, as none of the gang were ironed or shackled in any way.

My master had purchased a farm about one hundred and eighty miles from his brother's, my former master; at which we arrived, as I before stated, without any difficulty. My master remained on the farm until every thing was put in order, when he gave the farm up to the overseer, and started for his wife, whom he had not seen for six months. When we arrived at her father's plantation, I was kindly received by my mistress, and I had begun to hope that master and mistress were both kind people. But I was soon disappointed; for my mistress had been brought up in Louisiana, and had witnessed punishment all her life, and had become hardened to it. On the other hand, my

master had spent a number of years in the State of York, completing his education, and was unused to such cruelty as yet. As soon as every thing was arranged we started for home, which we reached without accident. My mistress had two favorite slaves; an old nurse about sixty years of age, and a maid-servant about fifteen. On our arrival, we were installed in our new offices; the nurse was to cook, the girl was to attend to the light duty of the house, I was to take care of the horse and carriage, chop wood, and any out-door work about the yard. For the first month or two, every thing went on quite smoothly; but soon the cloud grew black, the storm commenced. My mistress had suppressed the evil passions reigning within her as long as she was able; but her temper soon burst forth in all its fury. I had frequently spoken in terms of praise to the cook, of my mistress; but she always replied, that I was not acquainted with her yet. I soon perceived a change in the management of the household affairs. Her first act was to procure a cowhide, which was kept near for immediate use; and there was scarcely a day but some one of us felt it administered by her own hand upon our backs. I have seen her beat the old cook most shockingly; at one time she pushed her into the fire, and burnt her head very badly. This was the kindness to the person who had nursed her. Although I have seen her perpetrate some of the most cruel acts that a human being could, yet I never saw her in a passion when she was inflicting punishment. She seemed to take delight in torturing,—in fact, she made it a pastime; she inspired every one about her with terror. As for myself, I was perfectly terrified when she approached. I never saw, and never expect to

see, another person that I feared so much as I did that woman. She soon exerted her wicked influence over her husband, who was turned into a mere automaton, moving at her will; and he became through her a most cruel man, lashing and goading the slaves as she bid him. For the first few months my duties were as I have mentioned; but soon they were increased. I had, for one thing more, to tend the dinner table every day, and fan my mistress during her stay at the table. I have designed the following cut

The Author attending at the Dinner Table.

to represent this scene, more clearly than I am able in words. After the dinner, my mistress retired to the back piazza, to which place I had to accompany her, where there was a net hung for her amusement. She would generally lie down in it for an hour or so, and I had there to resume my fanning, as at dinner. When this was through, I had to bring the carriage to the door for her to take an airing in. She would ride four or five miles out and back before tea. I would then take care of my horse and carriage, and my duties were generally over for the day.

Thus passed about a year of my time with Mr. William McNeill; when, thinking that the service of a field-hand would be of more value to him, he made up his mind to part with me. He had promised, when he bought me, that he would never put me in the field to work. He asked me if I thought I could get a master? I told him I thought I could. He accordingly gave me a pass to go to Vicksburg, which is one hundred miles from my master's farm. There I was well acquainted, and thought I could get a master without any difficulty. I remained there two or three days looking for a master, but was unsuccessful. It then occurred to me that I would go to another town, about thirty miles from Vicksburg, where a gentleman lived who had often spoken of me in flattering terms. I accordingly started, and reached there in safety, and called on the gentleman, and presented the letter which my master had given me. After reading it and asking a few questions, he sent me into the kitchen. He then went across the street to a house where there was a drove of slaves for sale, and selected one and brought him over to me, and asked me if I thought he would do? I told him I thought he would. He placed him in charge of the stage-driver the next morning, for Mr. McNeill's farm. Thus ended my services with one of the worst mistresses on the Mississippi.

I entered the duties of my new situation with pleasure; not that I saw any thing more pleasing in my new master than I did in Mr. McNeill, but the thought of having left the farm, as I hoped, forever, was a source of great consolation to me. I do not mention the name of this

gentleman or of any of my subsequent masters, as I do not wish to afford them the means to trace me. I resolved, when I commenced my new services, that I would do every thing in my power to please my master, so that he would have no occasion to sell me; and I soon ascertained to my satisfaction that my efforts were not unsuccessful, for he entrusted me with the keys of his house,—he not being a married man,—which is the highest mark of confidence a slave enjoys. I had been with him but a short time, when I learned that he was training us for a hotel, which he intended opening in a neighboring city. This information pleased me much; for I thought the larger the city I was in, the smaller the chance would be of my getting on a farm. When the hotel was ready, he started with his servants. We reached there in safety, and went immediately to the hotel, where we each entered upon the duties assigned us; mine was in the dining-room, as waiter, a situation not very desirable on account of not being able to make as much money from boarders as in other stations in the house. In this situation I soon learned to gamble, in order to gain money from those who had the chance of making more than I made. In this wicked business I was very expert, and had constantly on hand a small stock of money. Slavery has made labor dishonorable to the white man; and, as they must have means of living, they generally resort to gambling for support, and as they cannot always find their own color to rob, they fasten upon the poor, degraded slave, who has received some little trifle for an extra piece of labor, to gull from him that which he has paid so dearly for; and I have spent many Sunday nights, after

my work was done, gambling. But, as about this time there arose a great excitement respecting gamblers, and having seen, in the city of Vicksburg, five gamblers hung, it rather tended to stop my nefarious business for awhile. The citizens, being determined to put a final stop to the practice, searched among the slaves to punish them for what they had learned from their white brothers. They accordingly had about one hundred up for examination, which was carried on very closely; and they came to the conclusion, that a free colored man and myself were the principals. We were brought before the court, which was held in the bar-room at the hotel where I was employed. The court seemed to have some sympathy for the free man. He was sentenced first to have his left ear cropped, to be tarred and feathered and put in a boat full of holes, and set adrift down the river. They appointed a committee to see it put into effect, and they then proceeded to sentence me. There was some disagreement respecting what my sentence should be. Some wanted me branded,—others, hung; but they at last agreed that I should have sixty lashes, to be received at the public whipping-post, and my master to give bonds for me to keep the peace. So great was the excitement, that for three weeks the city was kept under martial law. After I had got over my flogging, I resolved never to gamble again.

Very shortly after this, a circumstance occurred at the coffee-house, which I have seen noticed in print; but, as I was acquainted with the parties, and as some of my readers may not have read it, I will relate it. There was an old slave attached to the house, by the name of Jim, who was

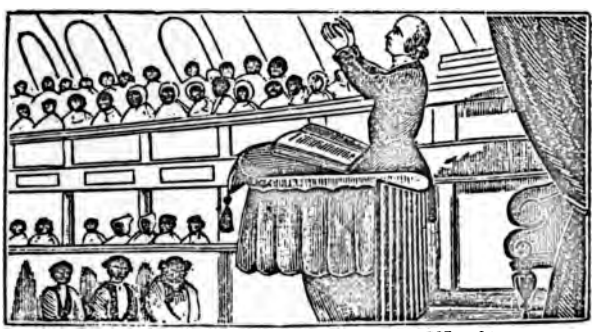
summoned one day to a room where there were two young slaveholders present. He had scarcely answered their call before he dropped down in a fit of apoplexy. "He is dead!" exclaimed one. "He'll come to," replied the other. "Dead, for five hundred!" "Done!" retorted the other. The noise of the fall and the confusion which followed, brought up the owner, who called for a doctor. "No! no! we must have no interference; there's a bet depending!" "But, Sir, I shall lose a valuable servant." "Never mind; you can put him down in the bill!" was their reply. The poor fellow, after suffering some length of time, finally came to. I merely state this fact, as I could many others, to show the passion for gaming the Southerners have, and the brutish manner in which a slave is treated.

Two years of my life passed away without any particular interruption, when one Sunday afternoon, I got into a dispute with another slave. High words were followed by blows; when I got exasperated, having drank freely of liquor, and stabbed him. I was immediately arrested and put in jail and kept till morning, when I was examined in court. My master, in the meantime, had engaged the services of a distinguished lawyer by the name of S. S. Prentiss, who by his able arguments extricated me from punishment by law; but recommended my master to flog me, which he followed to the letter. The slave with whom I had the difficulty was not injured so as to cause death, and eventually recovered.

I had never been to a meeting of a religious nature since I had been in the city; but, soon after the difficulty I have just mentioned, my master changed the hour for dinner,

which enabled us to go to church. There was a Methodist meeting-house on the hill near the jail, to which our master allowed us all to go every Sunday afternoon, as we could not go in the forenoon, where we heard the word of the minister preached to us, who was a white man; the law making it necessary that white persons should be present at all assemblages of slaves or free negroes.

The object of the slaveholders in having their slaves go to church can be clearly seen by the following sermon,



The Author in attendance on Public Worship.

which, or one very similar to it, I recollect hearing while worshiping at this church; it has been published and circulated quite extensively at the South:—"'All things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them:' That is, do by all mankind just as you would desire they should do by you if you were in their place, and they in yours. Now to suit this rule to your particular circumstances: suppose you were masters and mistresses, and had servants under you; would you not desire that your servants should do their business

faithfully and honestly, as well when your back was turned as while you were looking over them? Would you not expect that they should take notice of what you said to them; that they should behave themselves with respect towards you and yours; and be as careful of every thing belonging to you, as you would be yourself? You are servants; do, therefore, as you would wish to be done by, and you will be both good servants to your masters and to your God, who requires this of you, and will reward you well for it, if you do it for the sake of conscience, in obedience to his commands. Take care that you do not fret, or murmur, or grumble at your condition, for this will not only make your life uneasy, but will greatly offend Almighty God. Consider that it is not yourselves; it is not the people you belong to; it is not the men that have brought you to it; but it is the will of God, who hath by his wise providence made you servants, because, no doubt, he knew that condition would be best for you in this world and help you the better towards heaven, if you would but do your duty in it; so that any discontent at your not being free, or rich, or great as some others, is quarreling with your Heavenly Master, and finding fault with God himself. There is only one circumstance which may appear grievous; that I shall now take notice of,—and that is, correction. Now, let us see what the Scriptures say on this point. 'The servant that knoweth his master's will and doeth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes.' Now, does this not apply directly to yourselves? Now, when correction is given to you, you either deserve it, or you do not deserve it; but, whether you really deserve it or not, it is your duty, and Almighty God requires, that

you bear it patiently. You may perhaps think that this is hard doctrine; but if you consider right, you must needs think otherwise of it. Suppose, then, that you deserve correction, you cannot but say that it is right and just you should meet with it. Suppose you do not deserve it, or at least do not deserve so much punishment for the fault you have committed; you perhaps have escaped a great many more, and are at last paid for all. Or, suppose you are quite innocent of what is laid to your charge, and suffer wrongfully in that particular thing; is it not possible you may have done some other bad thing, which was never discovered, and that Almighty God, who saw you doing it, would not let you escape without punishment some time or another? and ought you not in such a case to give glory to him, and be thankful that he would rather punish you in this world for your wickedness than destroy your souls for it in the next? But, suppose that this even was not the case,—a case hardly to be imagined; and that you have by no means, known or unknown, deserved the correction you have received, there is this great comfort in it, that if you bear it patiently and leave your cause in the hands of God, he will reward you for it in heaven; and this punishment you suffer unjustly here, shall turn to your exceeding great glory hereafter."

Such, my readers, is the doctrine which is preached to the poor slave; and I could add many more specimens of it, if space would permit. They are made to believe that God made them slaves, that they are always to remain slaves, and bear with patience and humility the unjust punishment they receive on earth, that it may be to their glory hereafter. Is it not an unpardonable sin for man

thus to defile the holy sanctuary, and pollute the sacred word of God by using it for such base purposes? But comment is unnecessary; the diabolical facts show fairly enough of themselves, without my attempting to bring them out any more. The cut represents a number of slaves listening to preaching of this kind.

I remained at this place about four years, when I was hired out to a genteel sportsman, whom I was with for nine months, and in that time I traveled a great deal with him, and witnessed much of the sufferings of my brothers and sisters in bondage. But, from having seen so much, my heart began to grow less feeling for the sufferings of others, and even indifferent to my own punishment. My time having expired, I was sent back to my master. In traveling with this man, whose name I will not mention, I had cherished the idea of being my own master; but, returning to the State of Mississippi, my hopes left me for awhile, for it is almost a matter of impossibility for a slave to escape, on account of its situation; and added to that, there are men who do nothing else but hunt fugitive slaves with hounds that are so well trained, that they do, as they advertise, take slaves without scarring them enough to injure their value. I have said, my hope for freedom had left me. I am wrong; it was suppressed only, and it grew stronger from being suppressed, for I had determined to be free whenever an opportunity should present itself. I had to be extremely careful in my deportment, more attentive if possible to my duty, so that there should be no suspicion that I had made up my mind to run away; for the slaveholder watches every movement of the slave, and if he is downcast or sad,—in fact, if they are in any

mood but laughing and singing, and manifesting symptoms of perfect content at heart,—they are said to have the devil in them, which is the common term; and they are often whipped or sold for their supposed wicked intentions. But as for myself, the more I reflected upon my situation, the more cheerful I appeared to be. About this time a change came over my master's affairs, which caused me to be transferred into another's hands, which change I afterwards found to be of great benefit to me. To my great joy and satisfaction, I soon left this town; for I had made up my mind that it was one of the most wicked places that I had ever been in. We arrived at our place of destination without accident. I served this man as body-servant for some time, when, being known as a good waiter, I was hired out to the proprietor of a large hotel. In this situation I was endeavoring to gain all the information I could respecting the northern States, and the means of escape; but I could not obtain much satisfaction on this point, as white persons visiting the hotels are very careful what they say in the presence of the slaves. About six months after I had been at the hotel, there came a gentleman from the North, who seemed to manifest a great deal of sympathy for my situation, and who afterwards proved to be my deliverer from bondage, whose name I can give, if called for. He lives in the city of Boston. Yes; through him I am enabled to sit this minute at my own table, and also to worship God according to the dictates of my own conscience, and pray fervently for the great day of universal emancipation; when the husband may return to his wife; the child to the mother; when the clanking of chains, the

crack of the whip, the cries of the bleeding bondmen, shall no more ascend to heaven.

But I am wandering from the subject of my escape. One day, this gentleman, my deliverer, who had become quite well acquainted with me, overheard some remarks of mine, which caused him to ask me the following questions: "Are you a slave?" to which I replied, I was. He said that he had all along thought me to be a free man. He then asked who my master was? I told him. "Why don't you run away?" said he. I told him, with a laugh, I knew not where to go. At this moment, the bell which called me to my duty, rang, and I had to leave him; but with the determination to renew the conversation at the earliest opportunity, for it was what I had been long looking for,—a friend to consult with on the subject of freedom. The same night I had another opportunity to converse with him; and, finding that I was determined to escape, he informed me of the security the northern states afforded for free slaves, the feeling of the free people of color living there, and of the great anti-slavery movement there, a subject which I was entirely ignorant of before; and he then offered me the means of escape. He told me that there was a ship lying at the wharf, that would soon sail for the North, and that he was acquainted with some persons on board, whom he could get to interfere in my behalf. I had hoped that he would be able to make all arrangements without my going on board, but I was disappointed; for he told me that at twelve o'clock the same day, in case of not seeing him before that time, to go on board, and inquire for the captain; on seeing him, to make my bow to him, to look up unabashed, and ask him for a passage. He will

ask you where your home is? You must tell him, in Boston; for I have told you so much about it, that you can give him the information he will ask for. I told him, I thought I could. Should he ask you where in Boston you live, you may tell him at the North End. Should he ask you what street in Boston you live, tell him, in Ann street. Should he ask you, how Ann street runs, tell him it runs parallel with Commercial street; saying this, turn away with a laugh from the captain, telling him he needs no information about the streets of Boston, as he knows as well as you do of their situations. These questions he made me answer to him many times; and fortunate for me that he did, for I found them of great value to me. He then left me, charging me to go on board precisely at twelve o'clock, if I did not see him before that time. I spent all the rest of the morning in repeating my simple, but important catechism,—quite as much so to me in my situation as ever the famous Shorter Catechism, of Westminster Assembly notoriety, was to a youngster just receiving his first theological lesson from the lips of a Presbyterian parent, anxious to save the soul of his child; well will it be for all who repeat that important religious catechism, if it renders them as effectual service, in saving their souls, as mine did in saving my body and soul from slavery's cursed hell,—and thinking of the hour, waiting with impatience its approach, and yet dreading its coming; for I had seen so many slaves brought back, and witnessed the dreadful punishment they had received for attempting to get their freedom, that I shuddered at the consequences of detection. The hour at last arrived. My friend had not returned, and I started for

the ship; but, as I came in sight of it, my courage forsook me. I feared that I should not be able to appear manly and fearless. Had I not been brought under the lash of the white man? Had not every thing of a manly nature been beaten out of me? Had I not been taught that I was a slave,—that I was ever to remain as a slave? That it was the wish of Almighty God that I should be content with my situation? But my readers will excuse me for deviating from my narration to excuse the cowardly feelings which then induced me to turn back. But as I did so, I paused for a moment; and the thought of freedom—delicious freedom—came rushing over me, and filled my soul with pleasure, and I determined to persevere. Conning over my catechism again, I retraced my steps for the ship; and as it again came to my view, I felt like a new man, and that I would attempt it if it cost me my life. I went on board with a firm step, and inquired for the captain. I was shown him, and about the same questions were asked me that my kind friend had prepared me to answer. About the close of our interview the idea came to me, that, should he ask me for my free papers, what could I say,—what should I do? for I had none; and these thoughts came very near making me forget how to answer my last question, which was, the situation of Ann street. I however answered as I had been instructed, and took a step or two forward. On returning, I met the steward, who had just come out of the cabin, whom I had never seen before; and to my surprise he came up and addressed me in a manner that would indicate his having known me from boyhood, and asked me when I had heard from, and when I was going, home? I told him that I

had just applied to the captain for a passage. At this, he turned to the captain, and told him that he should want some assistance on the home passage; and, as I was an old acquaintance of his, he would like to have me go with him. The captain, seeing the supposed familiarity that was between us, replied that he would take me for half price, which was fifteen dollars. This was another blow, which I did not know how to avert; but the kind steward, seeing the dilemma that I was in, kindly offered to become responsible for the money. Oh! how joyful I then felt. I was lighter in body and mind, as if some crushing weight had been lifted from my shoulders. I left the ship and ran home, half crying and laughing, to think the day of my liberty was so near at hand. I reached the hotel in a state of mind impossible to describe. I however saw the necessity of suppressing my extraordinary joy, so that it would not be observed and lead to questioning me. I accordingly went to work concealing my thoughts, and looked eagerly for the day that the ship was to sail; for the captain had informed me when he would be ready to leave.

The day at length arrived for the sailing of the ship; and one hour before she sailed I went on board, with the clothes I was at work in, not daring to take a thing with me, although I had plenty at the hotel, for fear that it would excite suspicion. I stood upon the deck looking at every person about me, thinking that the excuse I could give if interrogated there would be more plausible than if I were in the cabin or any other part of the ship. Finally, the steamboat which was to take us down the river came up alongside and was made fast. As this was going

on I ventured to turn my head, and on the boat saw a man, whom I thought I had seen at the hotel. The thought came to me, should he see me, he might inform my master. I immediately feigned sickness, and stooped down over the rail of the vessel and made a piteous moaning, which attracted the attention of the captain, who ordered the steward to come to my relief. He came and assisted me down between decks, and laid me upon some old sails and ropes, telling me to remain there until he called me. In a short time he came and brought a glass half full of brandy, thick with cayenne pepper, for me to drink. I drank it, and for some minutes it made me think that I was all on fire within. This was to avoid suspicion. The steamer took us down the Mississippi, passed the city of New Orleans, and left us at the outside the Balize, at which time I had not appeared on deck, nor did I until the boat had left the ship and she had set her sails for sea; then I left my hiding-place, with my hands on my stomach. The captain then came up to me, and looking me full in the face, asked me if I had got well? I told him I was better. He said that I had better do some light work, and it would probably wear off. I then busied myself about the ship, endeavoring to make myself as useful as I could. We had a pleasant passage of twenty-nine days, and arrived in Boston without any thing special happening. I have taken care to suppress the captain's name, and the name of his ship, knowing that should it be known, it would cause him difficulty; and I never have given either since I have been a free man. The money which the steward paid for my passage I was able to refund to him in about a year afterwards.

Thus twenty-six years, the prime of my life, had passed away in slavery, I having witnessed it in all its forms; and I can with safety say, that there is no good in it; and I can never hear any person apologizing for it without pronouncing them to be meddling with that they know nothing of. I remained concealed for three weeks in the house of Mr. Wright, fearing to trust myself with any one, not knowing who was my friend. But, finding myself destitute, I at length ventured out, and my case became known among the people of color. I was directed to that friend and champion of the slave, William L. Garrison, who ever stands ready to assist and advise the panting fugitive. To him I told my history; and, after giving me pecuniary assistance, he advised me to leave the country and go to Canada, or England. As I considered his advice wholesome, I determined to follow it; and left the office in company with Mr. Nell, a gentleman of color, who had accompanied me there, and who is since deceased. As I proceeded down street, we met a gentleman whom Mr. Nell knew. This gentleman was inquiring for some one to work for him on board a vessel. I was introduced to him and accepted his proposals, and stayed with him a sufficient time to accumulate enough to leave the land of Bibles and whips, where there is no place for the fugitive to rest his weary feet. But, in justice to my late employer, the Hon. Josiah Sturgis, who I found to be my best friend, I would state, that he is a man possessed of a noble and generous heart; and that he is ever ready to assist the destitute who apply to him.

Once more I set sail for the land of freemen; and, when I touched the soil of Britain, I felt that I was

safe,—that I then was, in reality, free. On my passage out, there was a gentleman by the name of Hodges on board, who, having found that I was going to leave the ship, he hired me to travel with him. I accordingly entered into his service, and traveled over a large portion of England with him; and wherever I went, I was treated like a man. They looked not at the color of my skin, but judged me from my internal qualifications.

But, as I have been more lengthy in this little narrative than I intended, I will bring it to a close; sincerely hoping that it will interest my readers, and tend to ameliorate the condition of my three millions of brothers and sisters in bondage, as well as throw some light upon the condition of the slaves in Mississippi; the narratives of other fugitives having for their scenes other States. After remaining a few months in England, I judged it best for me to return to America, which I accordingly did.

This Narrative by no means covers the whole ground of my experience under slavery's iron protection; for I could easily fill a much larger space than this with accounts of what I have seen and felt of the kindly influences of that patriarchal institution, standing as it does (as McDuffie has well said) "at the corner stone of our republican edifice." Perhaps, hereafter, I may furnish some more facts respecting its heavenly character.

Before closing this little Narrative, by the request of a number of friends, I will state some facts in relation to the escape of my wife.

She was a slave in Maryland; was born about one hundred miles from Baltimore. Her mother was liberated at the death of her master, and left five children in

slavery, including my wife. Her mother removed to the North, where she had six other children. She is now dead, and the family are scattered. My wife remained at her birthplace until she was old enough to be hired out, then was taken to Baltimore and put to work. There she remained until she made her escape. The circumstances connected with her escape I will not repeat, lest I should block up the way, or affect the business of the underground railroad.

As she lived in a State where slavery subsisted in its mildest form, her experience in it was far different from many. She knew nothing comparatively of the grossest form of it; but notwithstanding this she cordially detests slavery, and is an earnest anti-slavery worker.

When toil-worn and care-worn, when well-nigh disheartened from all this care and toil, I have invariably been sustained by the sympathy and kind words of my wife. Truly, in the language of Scripture, she is "an ever present help in time of need." When, saddened in spirit by a reflection that my brethren are still groaning in bondage, I have found—from her former situation as a slave, being equally a sufferer with myself—she could enter into my feelings and cheer me with hopes of the approaching time of their liberation.

By the advice of my wife I destroyed the advertisement of my master, thinking my safety was endangered by it. Had it been in my possession now, I would have given the form without the name in connection with it.

APPENDIX.

EXTRACT FROM WELD'S "AMERICAN SLAVERY AS IT IS."

In the 'Charleston (South Carolina) Mercury,' of October 12, 1838, we find an advertisement, of half a column, by a Dr. T. Stillman, setting forth the merits of another 'Medical Infirmary,' under his own special supervision, at No. 110 Church street, Charleston. The doctor, after inveighing loudly against 'men totally ignorant of medical science,' who flood the country with quack nostrums backed up by 'fabricated proofs of miraculous cures,' proceeds to enumerate the diseases to which his 'Infirmary' is open, and to which his practice will be mainly confined. Appreciating the importance of 'interesting cases,' as a stock in trade on which to commence his experiments, he copies the example of the medical professors, and advertises for them. But, either from a keener sense of justice, or more generosity, or greater confidence in his skill, or for some other reason, he proposes to *buy up* an assortment of *damaged* negroes, given over as incurable by others, and to make such his 'interesting cases,' instead of experimenting on those who are the 'property' of others.

Dr. Stillman closes his advertisement with the following notice:—

"To PLANTERS AND OTHERS.—Wanted, *fifty negroes.* Any person having sick negroes, considered incurable by their respective physicians, and wishing to dispose of them, Dr. S. will pay cash for negroes affected with scrofula or kings' evil, confirmed hypochondria, apoplexy, diseases of the liver, kidneys, spleen, stomach and intestines, bladder and its appendages, diarrhœa, dysentery, &c. The highest cash price will be paid on application as above."

The absolute barbarism of a 'public opinion' which not only tolerates, but *produces* such advertisements as this, was outdone by nothing in the dark ages. If the reader has a heart of flesh, he can feel it without help, and if he has not, comment will not create it. The total indifference of slaveholders to such a cold-blooded proposition, their utter unconsciousness of the paralysis of heart, and death of sympathy, and every feeling of common humanity, for the slave, which it reveals, is enough of itself to show that the tendency of the spirit of slaveholding is, to kill in the soul whatever it touches. It has no eyes to see, nor ears to hear, nor mind to understand, nor heart to feel for its victims as *human beings.* To show that the above indication of the savage state is not an index of individual feeling, but of 'public opinion,' it is sufficient to say, that it appears to be a standing advertisement in the Charleston Mercury, the leading political paper of South Carolina, the organ of the Honorables John C. Calhoun, Robert Barnwell Rhett, Hugh S. Legare, and others, regarded as the *elite* of her statesmen and literati. Besides, candidates for popular favor, like the doctor who advertises for the fifty 'incurables,' take special care to conciliate, rather than outrage, 'public opinion.' Is the doctor so ignorant of 'public opinion' in his own city, that he has unwittingly committed violence upon it in his advertisement? We trow not. The same 'public opinion' which gave birth to the advertisement of Dr. Stillman, and to those of the pro-

fessors in both medical institutions, founded the Charleston 'Work-House,'—a soft name for a Moloch temple, dedicated to torture, and reeking with blood in the midst of the city, to which masters and mistresses send their slaves of both sexes to be stripped, tied up, and cut with the lash till the blood and mangled flesh flow to their feet, or to be beaten and bruised with the terrible paddle, or forced to climb the tread-mill till nature sinks, or to experience other nameless torments.—See *Weld's American Slavery as It Is*, p. 171.

FUGITIVE'S TRIUMPH.

Go, go, thou that enslav'st me,
Now, now thy power is o'er;
Long, long have I obeyed thee,
I'm not a slave any more.
No, no—oh, no!
I'm a *free man* evermore!

Thou, thou brought'st me ever
Deep, deep sorrow and pain;
But I have left thee forever,
Nor will I serve thee again;
No, no—oh, no!
No, I'll not serve thee again.

Tyrant! thou hast bereft me,
Home, friends, pleasures so sweet;
Now, forever I've left thee,
Thou and I never shall meet;
No, no—oh, no!
Thou and I never shall meet.

Joys, joys, bright as the morning,
Now, now, on me will pour,
Hope, hope, on me is dawning,
I'm not a slave any more!
No, no—oh, no!
I'm a FREE MAN evermore!

THE BEREAVED SLAVE MOTHER.

Oh! deep was the anguish of the Slave Mother's heart,
When call'd from her darling forever to part;
So grieved that lone Mother, that heart-broken Mother,
In sorrow and woe.

The lash of the master her deep sorrows mock,
While the child of her bosom is sold on the block;
Yet loud shrieked that Mother, poor heart-broken Mother,
In sorrow and woe.

The babe in return, for its fond mother cries,
While the sound of their wailings together arise:
They shriek for each other, the child and the Mother,
In sorrow and woe.

The harsh auctioneer, to sympathy cold,
Tears the babe from its Mother and sells it for Gold;
While the Infant and Mother loud shriek for each other,
In sorrow and woe.

At last came the parting of Mother and Child,
Her brain reel'd with madness, the Mother was *wild;*
Then the *Lash* could not smother the shrieks of that Mother,
Of sorrow and woe.

The child was borne off to a far distant clime,
While the Mother was left in anguish to pine;
But reason departed, and she sunk broken-hearted,
In sorrow and woe.

That poor mourning Mother, of Reason bereft,
Soon ended her sorrows, and sunk cold in death;
Thus died that Slave Mother, poor heart-broken Mother,
In sorrow and woe.

Oh! list ye kind Mothers to the cries of the Slave;
The Parents and Children implore you to save;
Go! rescue the Mothers, the Sisters and Brothers,
From sorrow and woe.

EXTRACTS FROM THE AMERICAN SLAVE CODE.

The following are mostly abridged selections from the statutes of the slave States and of the United States. They give but a faint view of the cruel oppression to which the slaves are subject, but a strong one enough, it is thought, to fill every honest heart with a deep abhorrence of the atrocious system. Most of the important provisions here cited, though placed under the name of only one State, prevail in nearly all the States, with slight variations in language, and some diversity in the penalties. The extracts have been made in part from Stroud's Sketch of the Slave Laws, but chiefly from authorized editions of the statute books referred to, found in the Philadelphia Law Library. As the compiler has not had access to many of the later enactments of the several States, nearly all he has cited are acts of an earlier date than that of the present anti-slavery movement, so that their severity cannot be ascribed to its influence.

The cardinal principle of slavery, that the slave is not to be ranked among *sentient beings*, but among things—is an article of property, a chattel personal—obtains as undoubted law in the slave States.

The dominion of the master is as unlimited as is that which is tolerated by the laws of any civilized country in relation to brute animals—to *quadrupeds;* to use the words of the civil law.

Slaves cannot even contract matrimony.

LOUISIANA.—A slave is one who is in the power of his master, to whom he belongs. The master may sell him, dispose of his person, his industry and his labor; he can do nothing, possess nothing, nor acquire any thing, but what must belong to his master.

Slaves are incapable of inheriting or transmitting property.

Slaves shall always be reputed and considered real estate; shall be as such subject to be mortgaged, according to the rules prescribed by law, and they shall be seized and sold as real estate.

No owner of slaves shall hire his slaves to themselves, under a penalty of twenty-five dollars for each offence.

No slave can possess any thing in his own right, or dispose of the produce of his own industry, without the consent of his master.

No slave can be party in a civil suit, or witness in a civil or criminal matter, against any white person.

A slave's subordination to his master is susceptible of no restriction (except in what incites to crime,) and he owes to him and all his family, respect without bounds, and absolute obedience.

Every slave found on horseback, without a written permission from his master, shall receive twenty-five lashes.

Any freeholder may seize and correct any slave found absent from his usual place of work or residence, without some white person, and if the slave resist or try to escape, he may use arms, and if the slave *assault* and strike him, he may kill the slave.

It is lawful to fire upon runaway negroes who are armed, and upon those, who, when pursued, refuse to surrender.

No slave may buy, sell, or exchange any kind of goods, or hold any boat, or bring up for his own use any horses or cattle, under a penalty of forfeiting the whole.

Slaves or free colored persons are punished with *death* for willfully burning or destroying any stack of produce or any building.

The punishment of a slave for striking a white person, shall be for the first and second offences at the discretion of the court, but not extending to life or limb, and for the third offence, *death;* but for grievously wounding or mutilating a white person, *death* for the first offence; provided, if the blow or wound is given in defence of the person or *property of his master*, or the person having charge of him, he is entirely justified.

A slave for willfully striking his master or mistress, or the child of either, or his white overseer, so as to cause a bruise or shedding of blood, *shall be punished with death.*

Any person cutting or breaking any iron chain or collar used to prevent the escape of slaves, shall be fined not less than two hundred dollars, nor more than one thousand dollars, and be imprisoned not more than two years, nor less than six months.

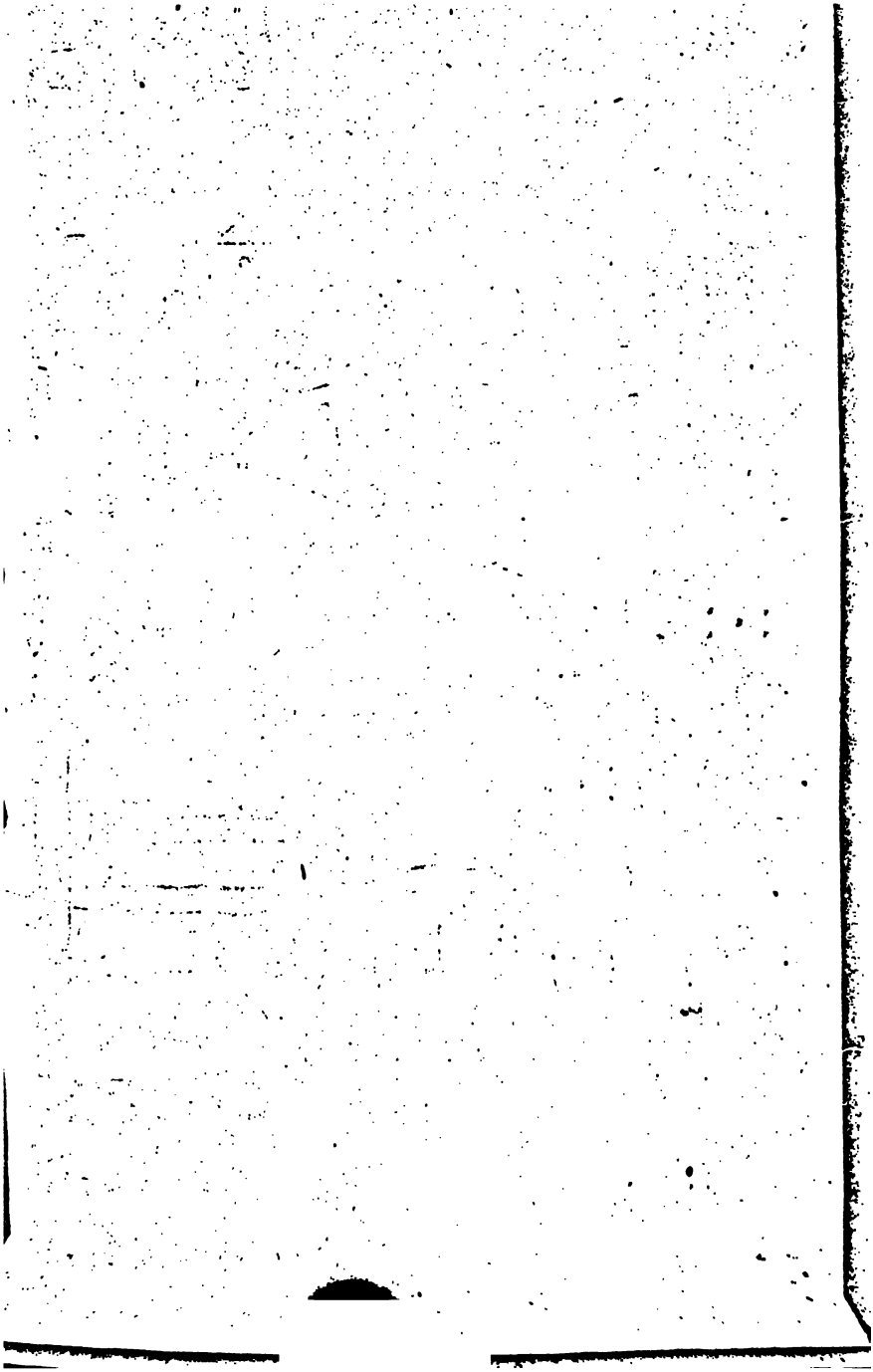
All slaves sentenced to death or perpetual imprisonment, in virtue of existing laws, shall be paid for out of the public treasury, provided the sum paid shall not exceed three hundred dollars for each slave.

The State Treasurer shall pay the owners the value of all slaves whose punishment has been commuted from that of death to that of imprisonment for life.

If any slave shall *happen* to be slain for refusing to surrender him or herself, contrary to law, or in unlawfully resisting any officer, or *other person*, who shall apprehend, or endeavor to apprehend, such slave or slaves, &c., such officer or *other person so killing such slave as aforesaid*, making resistance, shall be, and he is by this act, *indemnified*, from any prosecution for such killing aforesaid, &c.

And by the negro act of 1740, of South Carolina, it is declared:

If any slave who shall be out of the house or plantation where such slave shall live, or shall be usually employed, or without some white person in company with such slave, shall *refuse to submit* to undergo the examination of *any white* person, it shall be lawful for such white person to pursue, apprehend, and moderately correct such slave; and if such slave shall assault and strike such white person, such slave may be *lawfully killed!!*



Exchanging citizens for horses. This cut represents a slave cutting off his thumb, to avoid being sold from his family.

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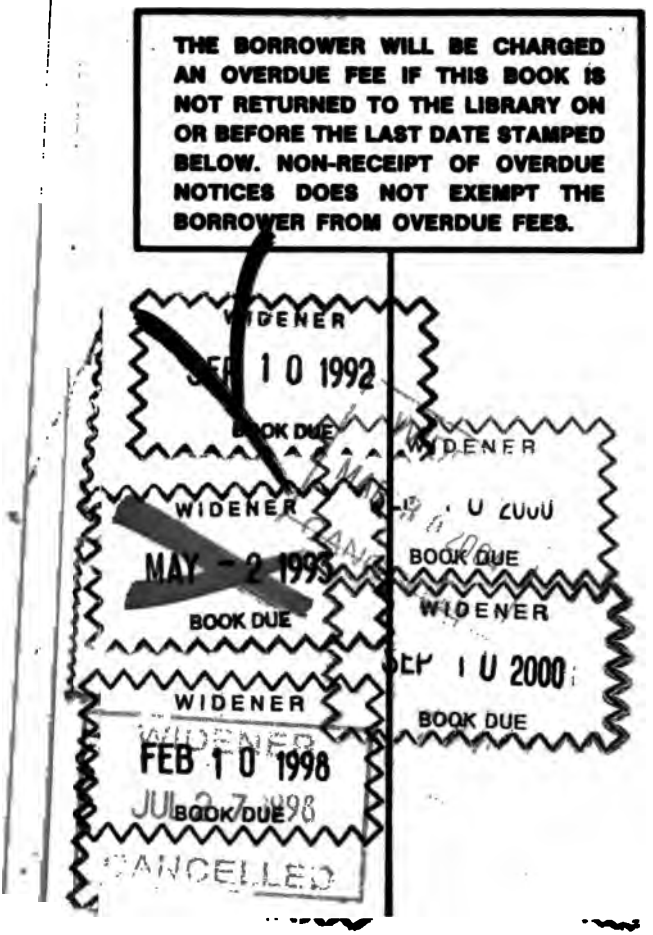
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